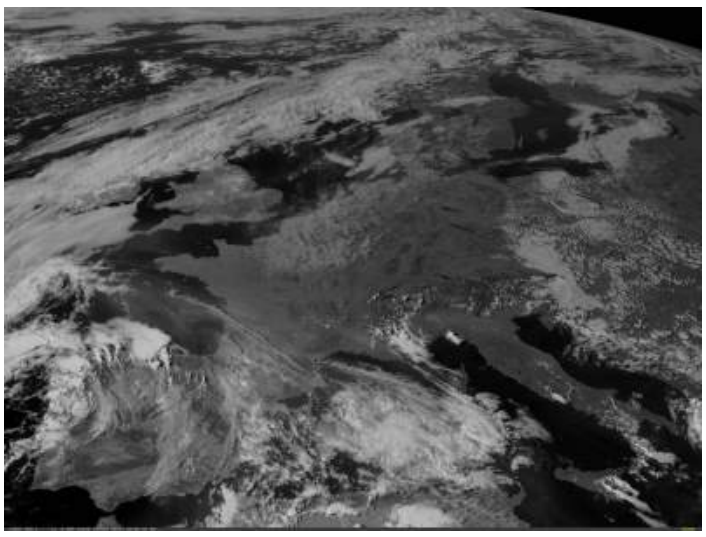
News release

European satellite set for launch

20 December 2005

Satellite data has revolutionised the way we see the atmosphere. It is a vital tool used in producing weather forecasts and monitoring the Earth's climate and oceans.



Wednesday 21 December 2005 sees the next phase in the multinational programme of Earth observing satellites as EUMETSAT's MSG-2 (Meteosat Second Generation) satellite is put into orbit. The satellite will be part of the payload aboard the Ariane launcher as it blasts off from Kourou in French Guiana at 2223 GMT.

When operational the satellite, to be named Meteosat 9, will provide scientists with a continual stream of data. On board the satellite is the Geostationary Earth Radiation Budget (GERB), a climate research instrument, designed and engineered at the CCLRC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory in Oxfordshire, which will monitor the Earth's radiation balance.

More about EUMETSAT

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Notes:

Invitation to launch-night events

EUMETSAT headquarters, **Darmstadt, Germany**

EUMETSAT is offering an exciting opportunity to go to Darmstadt to see the launch. This is due to take place on 21 December in Kourou, French Guiana and both ESA and EUMETSAT cordially invite you to attend an event to celebrate the occasion at EUMETSAT's headquarters in Darmstadt, Germany. There you will have the opportunity to meet and talk to members of both ESA and EUMETSAT and watch the launch live via a television link direct from Kourou.

The day will involve:

- presentations;
- Q&A sessions;
- interview opportunities;
- a tour of ESA Control Centre;
- press conference.

Please contact David Cunliffe directly at davidc@antarespr.co.uk for more information.

Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL), Didcot, Oxfordshire, UK

RAL is also hosting a launch night event at their Oxfordshire site. There will be live coverage of the launch in the lecture theatre at the CCLRC Rutherford Appleton Laboratory (RAL) and you are very welcome to join this event.

The MSG-2 launch phone line is 01235 446433 and thjis will be regularly updated with the latest information available. Please use this telephone line or the RAL Space Science & Technology Department web site to check that the launch has not been postponed. If the launch is postponed before 1900 on 21 December, the event will not go ahead on that day.

Please contact Natalie Bealing in the CCLRC press office on 01235 445484 if you would like to attend or require further information.

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